

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN MODERATOR

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Dear Town Meeting Members:

July 21, 2006

The School Committee is continuing to evaluate a major renovation and/or addition to the Wellesley High School. During the summer and fall of 2006, the School Committee plans to review the programming elements of the high school curriculum, in order to clearly define the physical requirements of the high school building. The programmatic decisions arising from this work will form the basis for the development of schematic designs for the high school. The decisions made during this formative study have the potential to significantly impact the scope and cost of the project.

The School Committee recognizes that the quality and suitability of the work done at the high school will impact the educational experience of Wellesley children for many years to come. The School Committee also recognizes that the long-term financial implications of this project make it a "Town-wide project", and not just a "School Committee project".

In order for the Town to support this project, its citizens will need assurance that the decisions made are well conceived, reflecting careful analysis of alternatives, a thoughtful, informed ordering of priorities, and a proper balancing of the needs of the community. In furtherance of this recognition, the School Committee, with the support of the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee, voted on July 13, 2006 to request the Moderator appoint an independent committee to participate in the programming phase, which will start this summer.

I have agreed to appoint such a committee, which will consist of at least five and no more than seven individuals, who have experience in construction trades, educational programming, and/or Town Government process. This committee will make a direct report to the next Town Meeting. Its term will expire at that time, unless Town Meeting votes to extend its term. I have charged this committee, to be known as the Program Review Advisory Committee (PRC) as follows:

The Moderator's Charge to the PRC

The focus of this committee will be to provide input to the School Committee as it seeks to understand the construction cost implications of its programming decisions, and

to help the School Committee explore alternative approaches that may achieve the programmatic goals at a better value. To that end, the charge of the PRC is:

1. To understand the program requirements, priorities and preferences as identified by the School Committee by:
 - a. Participating in all meetings pertaining to the programmatic design phase of the High School project, whether held by School Committee members, School Department personnel, or the School Committee's educational programming consultants (collectively, the "Project Team");
 - b. Reviewing all documentation prepared for or generated by such meetings; and
 - c. Requesting such other documentation from the School Committee or its consultants as the PRC deems necessary to fully understand the assumptions, needs, or priorities identified during the planning process.
2. To understand all applicable state and federal regulations, including but not limited to the new regulations of the Massachusetts School Building Authority;
3. To evaluate the interplay among the programmatic components, building specifications and costs of recently constructed/renovated high schools in towns with similar core values of Academic Excellence to provide benchmarks for the Town;
4. To confirm that the School Committee and its consultants have identified the programmatic choices which have significant implications for the cost of high school construction or renovation and have sufficiently considered alternatives and the benefits, drawbacks and cost implications of each such alternative;
5. To participate as the Project Team seeks ways in which the construction may be designed for maximum flexibility, in recognition of the possibility of changes in programming requirements in future years, and swings in the size of the high school student population; and
6. To provide such other feedback and recommendations to the School Committee as the PRC deems necessary or advisable in order to fulfill its purpose.

The PRC shall report its findings and recommendations to the next Town Meeting.

In carrying out their responsibilities, the PRC and the School Committee will work collaboratively to insure timely communication of information, ideas and concerns, and to insure timely exchange of documents and work products to fully assess the impact of programmatic decisions on the construction requirements for the high school.

Composition of the Committee

I have appointed Sid Farnsworth, Tom Goemaat, Ann Howley, Susan Hurwitz, Nan Langowitz and Cynthia Westerman to the PRC.

Mr. Farnsworth, a long-time Town Meeting Member, currently serves on the Permanent Building Committee. He is an engineer by training, the former CEO of The Cain Co., and a former lecturer at Tufts University. Mr. Farnsworth has also served on the Advisory Committee, the Personnel Board, and the Board of Public Works.

Mr. Goemaat is a civil engineer and President of Shawmut Construction Company. Mr. Goemaat served on the Facility Advisory Committee which advised the School Committee last year on High School building and renovation options. Mr. Goemaat has triplets who are entering the 9th grade at the High School.

Ms. Howley served on the Advisory Committee from 2001 -2004, during which time she was the Liaison to the School Committee. Prior to her retirement, Ms. Howley was the Director of Development for the Network of Sacred Heart Schools.

Ms. Hurwitz served on the Advisory Committee from 2003 to 2006, and was the Chair in 2006. She has experience in the product development planning process and organization design due to her many years in management at the Gillette Company.

Ms. Langowitz is a professor at Babson College and a former Town Meeting Member. She has a doctorate in business administration from the Harvard Business School. She was in charge of the renovations in the freshman and sophomore curriculum at Babson, which resulted in the integration of technology into the curriculum, utilization of team teaching, and modification of student schedules. Ms. Langowitz has three children, one of whom graduated from the High School this year, one child in the 11th grade, and one child in the Middle School.

Ms. Westerman works full time as an independent project manager of educational building projects for secondary and higher education institutions. She is currently managing a significant renovation/addition project for Buckingham, Browne & Nichols Upper School, for which she also completed the master plan and the building program phases. Other multi-year projects include space planning and project management for the Harvard Business School and Lesley University. Ms. Westerman also served on the School Committee's Facility Advisory Committee. She has two children at the Fiske School, and one at the Middle School.

I would like to thank these individuals for agreeing to serve, and to recognize the collaborative efforts of the School Committee, the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee in this process. My best wishes for a restful summer.

Heather B. Sawitsky
Moderator